the ROHMER REVIEW

No. 2

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The caricature of Fu Manchu on p. 27 was submitted by Jim Jones of Vista, California. The insidious doctor and marmoset appearing on p. 28 are the work of Danish artist Henry Lauritzen.

* *

The first issue of The Rohmer Review endeavored to reveal the broad scope of Sax Rohmer's literary ventures; the current issue is devoted to his best-known character, Dr. Fu Manchu. The historical and literary antecedants of the Devil Doctor and his chief antagonist are the subject of three articles.

It is deeply regrettable that TALES OF SECRET EGYPT, TALES OF CHINATOWN, and TALES OF EAST AND WEST are out of print, for it is generally agreed that Rohmer reached the zenith of his literary craftsmanship in his short stories. Why not write to Pyramid Publications, 444 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022, and say you want to see these titles reprinted?

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HOW FU MANCHU WAS BORN

by Sax Rohmer

I was very young in those days before the outbreak of World War I, a Fleet Street journalist--and London's Chinatown fascinated me. I made many friends in the Asiatic quarter, European as well as Oriental, and the sordid drama of Limehouse, with its orchestral accompaniement of river noises, a monotonous symphony, its frequent fog effects and sinister, sadistic crimes had cast a queer spell.

A man of mystery dominated the area at this time. According to Inspector Yeo of K. Division (Limehouse), he controlled pak-a-pu, the Chinese gambling game, also the drug traffic, and not one but all of those Chinese secret societies, the Tongs. He was feared by every Asiatic in the district, where he was known as "Mr. King," presumably only a part of his real name. He paid frequent visits to China. And no member of the Division had ever seen him or had the slightest idea what he looked like!

Raids and Arrests

The death of a pretty showgirl under circumstances which led to a Scotland Yard investigation unearthed a dope syndicate operating among London's smart set. There were raids in fashionable quarters and a number of arrests. But in spite of heavy prison sentences, the identity of the master mind controlling the syndicate remained unknown. Not one of those questioned would open his mouth.

A daily newspaper put a star reporter onto the job. His inquiries led to Limehouse. He heard of "Mr. King," whose shadow haunted London's Chinatown--but all lips were sealed.

Shortly afterward, a weekly magazine offered me a commission to see what I could do about it. I thought

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that with my many contacts I had at least a sporting chance of piercing the veil, and I began to comb Limehouse from Commercial Road to the waterfront: highways, byways, alleys and wharves. I got nowhere. The mere mention of "Mr. King" was a signal for silence.

Then, very fearfully, with warnings and promises of secrecy, a Chinese storekeeper whom I knew well hinted that "a person of importance" owned most of the houses in Three Colt Street and sometimes went there when in London. He was in London now!

The Doctor Appears

This mean little street ran down beside a canal (now demolished) to the riverside. It consisted of two-story houses, with occasional alleys between them, and was inhabited by Chinese sailors, laundrymen and so forth. I knew it quite well. But now I began to watch it like a weasel watching a rabbit warren. It was in a district where the police, after dark, always patrolled in pairs.

Which brings me to the night (appropriately, a foggy night) when I saw the prototype for Dr. Fu Manchu.

I was on my way home but made a detour to take me through Three Colt Street. It was getting late, and not a light showed in any of the dingy houses. I was halfway along when something happened--something sufficiently unusual in that place to qualify as a phenomenon.

A blade of white light suddenly split the darkness--from the headlamps of a limousine just turning into the narrow street. I took cover in the entrance to a narrow alleyway. The car pulled up less than ten yards from where I stood. A smart chauffer switched on the inside light, jumped out and opened the door for his passengers.

I saw a tall and very dignified man alight, Chinese, but different from any Chinese I had ever met. He wore a long, black topcoat and a queer astrakhan cap. He strode into the house. He was followed by an Arab girl, or she may have been an Egyptian. She reminded me of an Edmund Dulac illustration for the "Arabian Nights."

The chauffer closed the car door, jumped to his seat, and backed out the way he had come in. The headlights faded in the mist . . . and Dr. Fu Manchu was born!

If the tall Chinese was the elusive "Mr. King" or someone else, I cannot pretend to say; but that he was a man of power and enormous authority I never doubted. As I walked on through the fog I imagined that inside that cheap-looking dwelling, unknown to all but a chosen few, unvisited by the police, were luxurious apartments, Orientally furnished, cushioned and perfumed. I saw a spot of Eastern magnificence, a jewel in the grimy casket of Limehouse.

That very night, alone in my room, I searched through memories of the East, finding a pedigree for the beautiful girl I had seen through the fog. And she became Karamaneh (an Arabic word meaning a confidential slave), an unwilling instrument of the Chinese doctor.

Little by little, that night and on many more nights, I built up Dr. Fu Manchu, until at last I could both see and hear him. His knowledge of science surpassed that of any scientist in the Western world. He controlled every secret society in the East. I seemed to hear a sibilant voice saying, "It is your belief that you have made me; it is mine that I shall live when you are smoke."

So, you see, I had really brought something into being. I had set Dr. Fu Manchu out upon his great march to conquer the Western world. I had challenged him to sweep aside the white races and to win domination for his own. Since thoughts are things, perhaps in my extravagance I had made something not far short of what the future may hold. I sometimes wonder . . .

* *

ED.--The foregoing article also would seem to reveal at least a part of the source of Rohmer's inspiration for his novels THE YELLOW CLAW, DOPE, and THE GOLDEN SCORPION.

Thanks to the generosity of Mrs. Elizabeth Sax Rohmer, the next issue of The Rohmer Review will reprint her late husband's earliest published story, "The Green Spider."

SPECULATIONS ON THE ORIGIN OF DR. FU MANCHU

by John Harwood

Since the early part of the Twentieth Century, one of the most sinister of all fictional villains has thrilled and terrified the reading public. Dr. Fu Manchu, created by Sax Rohmer, has traveled throughout the world dealing torture and death to his foes.

Rohmer credited the origin of the evil Oriental to a chance encounter in the Limehouse district of London. As a reporter for a London newspaper he caught a glimpse of a tall, distinguished Chinese coming out of a limousine followed by an Arab girl. Rohmer had only a brief look at the two on that foggy night so long ago, but he elaborated the incident into a series of thirteen books and three short stories dealing with the adventures of the diabolical doctor.

Is it not possible, however, in his creation of Fu Manchu, Rohmer also may have been influenced, perhaps subconsciously, by other events? The first Fu Manchu book, THE INSIDIOUS DR. FU-MANCHU, appeared in 1913 and just a few years earlier there had been a series of suggestively similar criminal cases written up in the press of France. A band of criminals headed by an Oriental mastermind had terrorized Paris, and their exploits had spread as far afield as London and other European cities.

Hanoi Shan (this may or may not have been his real name) had originally been governor of a province in Tonkin-China. During this period of his life he was a kind-hearted man, tall, strong, and very athletic. But tragedy struck in the course of an elephant drive. Wild elephants in Asia are captured by being driven into huge stockades. Native beaters surround a herd and by beating drums, breaking branches, shouting, and making other noises, urge the great beasts toward the part of the jungle in which the stockade is located. Once they are inside the heavy log compound, men mounted on tame elephants mingle with the wild ones. The riders maneuver two of the tame animals on either side of a wild elephant and tie a heavy rope around one of its legs.

It was during such a drive that Hanoi Shan was thrown to the ground when one of the wild elephants attacked the beast he was riding. The enraged animal then lifted him in its trunk and hurled him against a tree. The French doctors at the hospital in Saigon did not expect him to live. He survived but was crippled for life with a twisted spine and shortened legs. He was so embittered by his misfortune that he became cruel and had little regard for human life. Finally his treatment of the native population became too much to bear and the people revolted. He left his native land on a French naval vessel just ahead of an angry mob thirsting for his blood.

He went to France where he tried to find doctors who could straighten his spine, but they were afraid to perform such a delicate operation. He disappeared from sight and when he next came to the attention of the authorities he was the leader of a criminal organization. He operated mostly in Paris, but some crimes that occurred in London and other European cities were laid at his door. He soon gained the title "l'Araignee," which is French for "the Spider." Like a terrible spider he wove a web around his victims, waited until the time was right, and then struck.

Hanoi Shan's organization included Apaches from the Paris underworld as well as some of the most vicious criminals of the Orient. He brought to the underworld of Europe some of the forbidden knowledge of the East. He had been known as a student of occultism, hypnotism, and black magic while still in Asia. He added the use of strange unknown drugs and poisons to the arsenal of French criminals.

One of the early cases dealing with the exploits of Hanoi Shan took place in Paris during August 1906, and a second occurred a few months later. Both court cases of the arrested criminals (Hanoi Shan in both instances had escaped arrest) were published in the Paris edition of the Chronique des Tribunaux, 1907-08. Sax Rohmer would have been able to read of the crimes either in the newspapers or in the official records several years before the publication of his first Fu Manchu story.

The crimes attributed to Fu Manchu by Rohmer far surpassed those of Hanoi Shan. Instead of making his villain merely an extraordinary criminal, Rohmer made him an international Napoleon of crime who operated throughout the world. Where Hanoi Shan was satisfied with stealing jewels (usually diamonds) or murdering for them, Fu Manchu had greater plans. He was continually working for the domination of China over the rest of the world (with himself as the master of all men).

The exploits of Hanoi Shan were called to the attention of the American public by Harry Ashton-Wolfe, one-time assistant and pupil of the great French criminologist, Dr. Alphonse Bertillon. In the 1920's he wrote several series of tales recounting the investigations of the French Surete for the American Weekly, a magazine section that was distributed with Sunday newspapers all over the country. In 1928 Houghton Mifflin published a book containing several cases from these series. This book, WARPED IN THE MAKING: CRIMES OF LOVE AND HATE, contained ten stories including two of the Hanoi Shan adventures. These were titled "The Suicide Room," the story of a series of apparent suicides by hanging in a hotel room, and "The Scented Death," which concerned the use of an unknown Oriental drug that drove men to madness. Rohmer fans might well read these two stories and draw their own conclusions to the question: could Fu Manchu have been the fictional descendant of Hanoi Shan?

* *

ED.--WANTED: Information concerning the whereabouts of "The Mysterious Mummy." According to Day's BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ADVENTURE (1964) this short story, one of Rohmer's earliest titles, was published in Pearson's Magazine in 1905. However, several interested parties have searched the pages of Pearson's without success (one checked all volumes from 1896 through 1913). Anyone knowing the location of the elusive mummy is urged to notify the Editor--your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

A CASE OF IDENTITY:
Being a Trifling Monograph Upon the Similarities Between Sir Denis Nayland Smith and Sherlock Holmes

by Andrew Jay Peck

If you were to overhear two people talking about a mystery story in which a tall, thin detective goes to a house that has a band of gypsies and a tame cheetah on its grounds, would you think that they were talking about Sherlock Holmes at Stoke Moran during "The Adventure of the Speckled Band?" You might be correct, however "'One should always look for a possible alternative . . . '"[1] The other, and equally correct, choice "when you have eliminated the impossible," is Sir Denis Nayland Smith at Abbots Hold, the home of his friend Sir Lionel Barton, in THE DAUGHTER OF FU MANCHU. The fact is that the Fu Manchu stories by Sax Rohmer and the Sherlockian Canon by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle exhibit certain similarities in the physical features and personalities of the protagonists, Smith and Holmes, and even in some of the dialogue. But, as "'there is nothing new under the sun,'"[2] I know of no finer work of fiction that Rohmer could have drawn upon for the Fu Manchu stories.

After those fateful words, "'Dr. Watson, Mr. Sherlock Holmes,'" were spoken, Watson observed of Holmes that:

> "His very person and appearance were such as to strike the attention of the most casual observer. In height he was rather over six feet, and so excessively lean that he seemed to be considerably taller. His eyes were sharp and piercing, and his thin, hawk-like nose gave his whole expression an air of alertness and decision. His chin, too,

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[1] "The Adventure of Black Peter," THE RETURN OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

[2] A STUDY IN SCARLET

had the prominence and squareness which mark the man of determination."[3]

Watson later added that Holmes' grey eyes shone "with a steely glitter."

Compare the foregoing with these descriptions of Sir Denis Nayland Smith:

"a tall, thin man, his gaunt face . . . and his steely gray eyes . . ."[4]

"His jaw muscles were very prominent and his eyes shone like steel . . ."[5]

"Nayland Smith's eyes were more than normally bright, and his features . . . looked almost haggard."[6] (Holmes was in this condition several times when he, too, was overworked.)

"And in this room, pacing restlessly about, he saw a tall, lean man who smoked a pipe . . ."[7]

"Smith was pacing up and down in an old silk dressing gown and smoking his pipe."[8]

This brings us to two similarities of these great detectives--both often wore their dressing gowns while trying to reason out a problem, and both were pipe smokers. Moreover, both were very sloppy pipe smokers. Luther Norris had this to say about Holmes, Sir Denis, and pipes (Pipe Smoker's Ephemeris, Winter 1967-68):

"I fear that our old friend Holmes was, after all, a very sloppy pipe smoker. Like Nayland Smith from the Fu Manchu stories, I shudder to think what the old

[3]A STUDY IN SCARLET
[4]THE RETURN OF DR. FU MANCHU, p. 10
[5]Ibid, p. 18
[6]THE MASK OF FU MANCHU, p. 21
[7]RE-ENTER FU MANCHU, p. 130
[8]THE DRUMS OF FU MANCHU, p. 80
All page citations refer to the Pyramid paperback editions.

> briar must have tasted like after a long session without cleaning! In the case of Nayland Smith we have a cracked briar, no less! Also, in both the case of Sherlock Holmes and Nayland Smith, we have both parties knocking their pipes out on all sort of objects with little or no regard to the pipe itself. Small wonder that Sir Nayland cracked his bowl. I'm surprised he didn't break it off at the stem! I'm even more surprised at Sherlock Holmes, as one of his favorite pipes was a clay. I cannot imagine a clay pipe receiving the treatment that Holmes would have given it lasting more than a 'three pipe problem.' The curved stem, was, of course, adopted by William Gillette in his stage role of Holmes. The actor found it much easier to speak his lines with a curved stem. (Rathbone used a curved-stemmed Dunhill in his movies.) The fact remains that both Holmes and Sir Nayland were terrible examples of the fine art of pipe smoking. Why Holmes should select a cheap shag tobacco, such as English sailors used, is an impossible thing to imagine. And how long, I ask you, would even shag stay fresh in a slipper! I can appreciate the battered tobacco pouch used by Nayland Smith, of course. (How hard it is to part with an old tobacco pouch!) In Holmes' case it is small wonder that he was often in a spirit of deep depression. His damned pipe was, I suspect, the cause of it."

Smith, like Holmes, could sit motionless at times, and be full of energy at other times; like Holmes, at times he would be loath to discuss the case with Petrie (an M.D. who, like Watson, was always ready to assist as his "professional duties were not onerous"). Petrie "knew these moods and had learnt that it was useless to seek to interrupt them."[9]

[9]THE RETURN OF DR. FU MANCHU, p. 87

Just as Holmes did for Watson, Smith often had to vouch for Petrie, as in this case with Sir James Clare, the Home Secretary:

> "'I don't know your friend. This unhappy business, of course, is tremendously confidential.'
>
> Nayland Smith made a rapid introduction.
>
> '. . . You may have his discretion for granted.'"[10]

One of the few sports that Holmes ever participated in was boxing. Sir Denis, we are told, understood the rules of boxing,[11] and he was told by Dr. Malcolm, one of Fu Manchu's hirelings, that "'You are an expert boxer, Sir Denis; for a man of your years, a remarkable one.'"[12]

Rohmer borrowed both "the curious incident" (see SHADOW OF FU MANCHU, p. 138), and this quotation from "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot" (HIS LAST BOW), the Rohmerian equivalent of which can be found in PRESIDENT FU MANCHU, p. 129:

> Holmes: "'I followed you.'"
> Sterndale: "'I saw no one.'"
> Holmes: "'That is what you may expect to see when I follow you.'"

Sir Denis, like Holmes, would snap at those less astute than he was:

> "'Observe anything unusual? . . .'
>
> 'Really, Kerrigan, as a star reporter you disappoint me.'"[13]

Smith, like Holmes, didn't confide his plan of faking death to Petrie, and for the same reason:

> "'Smith' I said-- 'how could you submit me . . . '
>
> He clapped his hands on my shoulders.
>
> 'My dear old chap--there was no other way, believe me . . . . '

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[10] THE DRUMS OF FU MANCHU, p. 9
[11] Ibid, p. 24
[12] SHADOW OF FU MANCHU, p. 63
[13] THE ISLAND OF FU MANCHU, p. 68

'But you might have confided . . .'

'Impossible! I'll admit I nearly fell to the temptation that first night; for I could see into your room as well as into his!' He slapped me boisterously on the back, but his gray eyes were suspiciously moist. 'Dear old Petrie! Thank God for our friends! But you'd be the first to admit, old man, that you're a dead rotten actor! Your portrayal of grief for the loss of a valued chum would not have convinced a soul on board.'"[14]

As with Holmes in "The Adventure of the Three Garridebs" (THE CASEBOOK OF SHERLOCK HOLMES), the sight of his companion wounded caused a temporary break in the "machine:"

"In those few fleeting seconds I saw Sir Denis Nayland Smith, for the first and last time in my knowledge of him, fighting to subdue his emotions. His head dropped into his upraised hands, his fingers clutched his hair."[15]

Once, in THE DAUGHTER OF FU MANCHU, Sir Denis gave this as part of his reason for not telling Petrie that he was not dead:

"'The answer is this: I had learned . . . that an inquirer who has no official existence possesses definite advantages.'"

Holmes' methods were always sneered at by Lestrade and company; Smith got his fair share of criticism from, among others, His Majesty's Secretary:

"'You know . . . your methods have been too fantastic for me, Smith . . . This thing, which you are asking me to do, is irregular--wholly irregular.'"[16]

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[14]THE RETURN OF DR. FU MANCHU, p. 190 (This is only one of several such incidents.)

[15]THE BRIDE OF FU MANCHU, p. 22 (Also one of several such incidents.)

[16]THE TRAIL OF FU MANCHU, p. 36

But Petrie knew better:

> "Singular though my friend's proceedings appeared to me, I had ceased to wonder at anything."[17]

> "Smith's methods frequently surprised me, but always in the past I had found that they were dictated by sound reasons."[18]

Just as The Yard was skeptical about the existence of Moriarty (THE VALLEY OF FEAR), so was its opinion about Fu Manchu:

> "'You know . . . this bugbear of yours, this obsession with the person known as Fu Manchu, has created a lot of unpleasant feeling.'"[19]

> "In my ignorance I think I laughed.
> 'A name to me--a bogey to scare children. I had never supposed such a person to exist.'
> 'Scotland Yard held the same opinion at one time, Kerrigan.'"[20]

Holmes, in THE VALLEY OF FEAR, said "'Everything comes in circles--even Professor Moriarty.'" Smith and others used a slight variation of that in THE TRAIL OF FU MANCHU.

Sir Denis, like Holmes, "'has a gift for make-up,'"[21] but, unlike Holmes, he did not own his own disguises, and so had to avail himself of Scotland Yard's "fancy wardrobe department." However, Smith's disguises were not always successful; once, when he was in clerical dress, Fu Manchu's henchmen attempted to run him down with a lorry.

Rohmer seemed to be particularly fond of "The Final Problem" (MEMOIRS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES) and "The Adventure of the Empty House" (THE RETURN OF

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[17]THE INSIDIOUS DR. FU MANCHU, p. 12
[18]THE HAND OF FU MANCHU, p. 92
[19]THE TRAIL OF FU MANCHU, p. 36
[20]THE DRUMS OF FU MANCHU, p. 21
[21]THE TRAIL OF FU MANCHU, p. 154

SHERLOCK HOLMES), for he borrowed many ideas from these stories. The faked death, clerical dress, and hit-and-run lorry are borrowed from "The Final Problem." Also derived from that story are the fake call for a doctor in order to remove Petrie from proximity to someone marked for death by Fu Manchu, and the following statement, which nearly paraphrases Moriarty's claim of what Holmes had done to him:

> "' . . . I have clipped his wings pretty severely. I have cut him off from many of his associates. I am getting very near to the heart of the mystery. He is financially embarrassed. He's a hunted man.'"[22]

Rohmer borrowed the decoy idea from "The Adventure of the Empty House." Smith had his servant Fey pace up and down by the window (What type of window? A bay window, of course.), so it would look like Smith was still inside. Fey was shot at. With what? Elementary--an air gun.

Also derived from "The Adventure of the Empty House" are these passages:

> "It is a fact, singular, but true, that few Londoners know London. Under the guidance of my friend, Nayland Smith, I had learned . . . how there are haunts in the very heart of the metropolis whose existence is unsuspected by all but the few . . ."[23]

> "'. . . because it may serve to keep your mind busy during hours when otherwise it would be engaged with profitless sorrows, I invite you to puzzle out this business for yourself.'"[24]

Holmes was first told that he should become a detective (in "The Gloria Scott," MEMOIRS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES) by the father of a friend whose dog had

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[22]THE TRAIL OF FU MANCHU, p. 26

[23]THE INSIDIOUS DR. FU MANCHU, p. 121

[24]THE HAND OF FU MANCHU, p. 96 (A longer version of Holmes' "'Work is the best antidote to sorrow.'")

frozen onto Holmes' foot. A similar incident was equally important for Sir Denis, for his recollection of the event proved that he was the real Nayland Smith, and not the person who had impersonated him:

> "'Do you remember my father's dog?' he asked.
>
> 'Do I remember Rufus! . . . . Good reason to remember him, Merrick.' He pulled up his left trouser leg. 'There's the souvenir he left me . . .'"[25]

And from the same book, when Sir Denis sees the imposter killed by mistake in his place:

> "'There, but for the grace of God, goes Nayland Smith.'"

Holmes said the same thing in "The Boscombe Valley Mystery" (ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES). But at least he gave credit to Baxter.

Sir Denis had retired before the events recorded in RE-ENTER FU MANCHU took place, but because of his special knowledge of the problem, at the request of Washington he volunteered to act in the case. (Although we do not know who requested that he be brought into the case, he did carry a card signed by the President.) Holmes came out of retirement in "His Last Bow" (HIS LAST BOW) at the request of London. ("'The Foreign Minister alone I could have withstood, but when the Premier also deigned to visit my humble roof--!'")

Nayland Smith was a reader of the personal column of the newspapers, as was Holmes. Smith, as did Holmes before him, used a bet as a means of getting information (Holmes in "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle," ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES; Smith in THE TRAIL OF FU MANCHU), and several other times he frequented an opium den to get a lead. Like Holmes, "Sir Denis's hours of rising were unpredictable." Smith had bases near areas that he was investigating, just as Holmes had five or more places where he could disappear for a while and completely change his identity ("The Adventure of Black Peter").

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[25] RE-ENTER FU MANCHU, p. 127

Sherlock Holmes was offered a knighthood, but refused it. Smith was knighted, but in PRESIDENT FU MANCHU, he told Mark Hepburn:

> "'Cut the 'Sir Denis,' came crisply; 'I was born plain Smith. It's time you remembered it.'"

More parallels could be drawn, but the foregoing should suffice to establish that the similarities between Nayland Smith and Holmes are more than coincidental. Rohmer's familiarity with the Sherlockian Canon is clearly reflected in the following quotations:

> "'Sherlock Holmes' weakness for cocaine has endeared him to the hearts of two generations.'"[26]

> "'While a physiognomist might have been mistaken in the temper and make-up of the man, the lamented Mr. Sherlock Holmes could not have failed to note his hands.'"[27]

A newspaper clipping quoted in The Journal of Fu Manchu #2 stated that Rohmer "'had long conversations with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle about spiritualism.'" Perhaps their conversations occasionally turned to the subject of fictional detectives as well. At any rate, there can be no doubt that Rohmer admired Doyle's hero and apparently was influenced by him in developing the character and characteristics of Sir Denis. I am not by any means implying plagiarism on Rohmer's part, for his works differ greatly from Doyle's in plot and in style. Both are well worth reading.

[26]THE ORCHARD OF TEARS, p. 138 (4th Ed.)
[27]THE BAT FLIES LOW, p. 20 (1st Ed.)

* *

ED.--It may be noteworthy that several sources refer to Rohmer himself as resembling Sherlock Holmes. It would repay the interested reader to take another look at the Rohmer portrait appearing on the back cover of the current Pyramid editions.

ROHMER ARTIST LEN GOLDBERG: A CAPSULE BIOGRAPHY

by Douglas A. Rossman

Len Goldberg, whose beautiful and aura-capturing illustrations grace the covers of the recent Pyramid editions of the Fu Manchu series, was born in Boston in 1922 and attended Boston Latin School and Massachusetts College of Art before serving in the Air Force during World War II. He worked in Boston and Montreal before arriving in New York in 1951, where he was associated with a large studio for the next 10 years--he has done free-lance work ever since. Having handled all kinds of commercial and editorial assignments, Goldberg nevertheless particularly enjoys story illustration "with a special fondness for Fu Manchu--the only work for which I received 'fan mail.'"

He writes "The 'm.o.' in approaching Fu Manchu was as follows: a thorough reading of the book, preparation of color sketches reproduction size, discussion with art director and editorial executives, ultimate approval, and the final painting. I tried at all times to express the sinister intelligence of Fu Manchu and something of the plot without giving away too much." Rohmer fans can readily attest to the success of his endeavors.

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FLEET STREET REPORT

by Andrew Jay Peck

All of us associated with the Review were surprised, delighted, and, of course, very proud to see the nice writeup the magazine and the Society received in Allen Hubin's "Criminals at Large" column of The New York Times Book Review Section, 1 December 1968. We are most grateful to Mr. Hubin for his kind words, which resulted in a rash of new members in early December.

Our thanks also to August Derleth for mentioning us in the recent issue of The Arkham Collector.

* * *

The Ideal Toy Company (200 Fitch Ave., New York, N.Y.) has produced a Fu Manchu board game. It is called "Fu Manchu's Hidden Hoard," and lists at $4.95.

It is in Ideal's Famous Mystery Classics Series, which also includes an Ellery Queen game, an Agatha Christie game, and a Sherlock Holmes game. Here is what Ideal says about the game:

> "FU MANCHU'S HIDDEN HOARD--Our arch-criminal, the insidious Dr. Fu, proves himself yet the master of deception! The players are allowed to discover several maps containing conflicting clues to the location of Fu's Hidden Hoard. Determining the true clues and finding the treasure is the object of the game. Two to four players enjoy intriguing interplay of deductive logic and luck."

Although I haven't seen the game, the description leads me to believe that it may be something like Parker Brothers' "Clue" game. I have, however, seen the Sherlock Holmes game, which is slow moving and boring.

Luther Norris tells me that The Game Room, P. O. Box 1816, Washington, D.C. 20013, is offering a very large "Fu Manchu for Mayor" poster, featuring Christopher Lee as the sinister candidate. It sells for $3.25 including postage.

* * *

> "Dear Doctor:
> Recently, after watching an exhibition game involving the New York Mets on TV, I dozed off, only to awake to find a bony hand on my arm. The fingers had incredibly long nails--nails as long as those of some buried vampire of the Dark Ages. Choking down a cry of horror, I looked again and saw that the hand belonged to Fu Manchu. What to do?
>
> Dr. Nayland Smith Petrie, Bronx"

I found the above in the New York Post of 29 March 1968. It was in a column by sports columnist Jerry Mitchell, entitled "Just Lie Down on the Couch," which was composed of letters supposedly written to him by people telling of their problems.

Since I mentioned sports, it is interesting to note that N.Y. Jets quarterback Joe Namath's mustache has been pictured nationwide in newspapers and on TV

and called a Fu Manchu-type mustache. This is about as correct as describing a curved-stemmed pipe as a Sherlock Holmes-type pipe! Query: where did the notion that Fu had a mustache first arise?

* * *

On television in November, Truman Capote's "A Thanksgiving Visitor," a moving story of an incident in his own life 30 years earlier, held an added bonus for Rohmerians. During the course of the drama the youthful Capote told of reading THE ADVENTURES OF FU MANCHU, which involved Fu Manchu, Fah Lo Suee, Sir Denis Smith, the Essence of Obedience, a scroll relating the secret of the Essence, and a train wreck designed to obtain the scroll from Sir Denis. Sound familiar to anyone?

For the eight SRS members in attendance, the highlights of the sixth annual Deep South Science Fiction Convention, held in New Orleans, 23-25 August 1968, were the films "The Secret of Fu Manchu" and "The Mission of Mr. Foo." The former was one of the episodes from the ill-fated The Adventures of Fu Manchu TV series, starring Glenn Gordon. The other movie was a silent film, circa 1915, which might best be termed a parody of Fu Manchu.

* * *

At hand is The Journal of Fu Manchu #2 (issued in January 1968; #1 apparently came out in late 1965), a 7-page newsletter containing many interesting items, the most noteworthy being a series of excerpts from newspaper clippings dating back as far as 1945. I don't know if the Journal is still operational.

John Boardman examined the matter of racial stereotypes in the works of Rohmer--and others--in his article "Pulp Race," in Amra, vol. 2, no. 48, pp. 16-17.

Fred Meyer sent news of an article by H. Allen Smith appearing on page 6 of the Chicago Tribune Book World of 21 April 1968. It is entitled "Flashback: The Day Houdini Rescued Fu Manchu," and tells of an occasion when Rohmer was at his wits' end trying to decide how to bring a book to a close, and Houdini saved him by suggesting a way to bring it to a successful conclusion.

Fu Manchu appears in a Sherlockian pastiche, "The Crimson Fog," written by Tom Hammond and currently appearing serially in the Baker Street Pages. Fu's name also cropped up several times in "The Moriarty, the Merrier" column of Sidelights on Holmes. More information on the latter can be obtained from John Sikorski, 1410 North Lathrop, River Forest, Illinois 60305.

* * *

THE SINS OF SEVERAC BABLON, a hard-to-get early Rohmer novel, has been reprinted in limited edition (1967) and is available at $4.50 from Bookfinger, Box 487, Peter Stuyvesant Station, New York, N.Y. 10009. This handsome hardbound edition is printed on good paper and bound in black cloth with gold lettering.

One of Sax Rohmer's few non-fiction efforts, "The Music of Magic," was recently reprinted in THE FIRST OCCULT REVIEW READER (Award Books, New York, 75¢), and gives Rohmer buffs an opportunity to view his scholarly facet.

Those of you who have not already done so will enjoy reading THE RAINBOW AFFAIR by David McDaniel (Ace Books, New York, 50¢). It is #13 of The Man From U.N.C.L.E. novels. In it, Fu Manchu (the elderly Chinese gentleman) and Sherlock Holmes (William Escott, bee keeper), as well as other famous fictional chracters who are less easily identified by the reader, appear as unnamed supporting characters. To quote from Len Moffatt's review in The Armchair Detective (Vol. 1, #3), " . . . it isn't so much a novel as a Game (of identifying famous fictional characters) one plays with the author."

* * *

A reminder that information in the following areas should be sent directly to the appropriate Associate Editor:

Bibliography--Robert E. Briney, 233 Lafayette St., Apt. #2, Salem, Massachusetts 01970.

Current Events, Newsnotes--Andrew Jay Peck, 2968 Perry Ave., Bronx 58, N.Y.

Movies, TV, Radio--Tom Hammond, 102 Elaine Ave., North Syracuse, N.Y. 13212

LETTERS TO LIMEHOUSE

Wherein appear excerpts the Editor believes will be of interest to SRS members generally.

From Robert E. Briney, Salem, Massachusetts:

On skimming through my article, I find a couple of errors and omissions that I should have caught in the rewriting process, but didn't. Most serious is the omission of the titles of the "Red" Kerry books (DOPE and YELLOW SHADOWS) in the paragraph devoted to him. The checklist of Rohmer books also contains some inaccuracies . . . .

EXPLOITS OF CAPTAIN O'HAGAN should come after THE DEVIL DOCTOR, not before; EXPLOITS was published in December 1916.

BROOD OF THE WITCH QUEEN should come between SI-FAN MYSTERIES and THE ORCHARD OF TEARS: the British edition was published in 1918, while the U.S. edition did not appear until 1924.

TALES OF EAST AND WEST should have been listed twice, once for the British edition in 1932 and once for the U.S. edition in 1933; the two books are quite different.

THE MOON IS RED comes before RETURN OF SUMURU (February vs. June).

Also: the name "Fu-Manchu" should be hyphenated in HAND OF FU and BOOK OF FU, though not in the later books.

* * *

From John E. Carroll, Baltimore, Maryland:

In the 1920's, Sherlock Holmes was a popular hero of the reading public until such Sax Rohmer books as THE YELLOW CLAW, THE GOLDEN SCORPION, and THE INSIDIOUS DR. FU-MANCHU first made their appearances in the large department stores. They were read by both men and women, even older children.

I, of course, can only speak for Baltimore; and these times, referred to as the Roaring Twenties, were devoted to things Oriental. People wore Chinese-style pajamas, Japanese nightgowns and kimonos. Incense and incense burners, wind chimes and vases with Oriental décor were "all the rage." "Limehouse Blues," "Chinatown, my Chinatown," "My Little Bimbo,"

"Tio San from Japan," and "Japanese Sandman" were all products of the songwriters who wrote more romantically than factually about countries in the Far East, so far East in fact that news about them leaked in from seafarers after long voyages. Little was known about them.

There were no radios, television, bars and night-clubs (speakeasies--yes) and very few cabs or automobiles; life was slow. People were left to amuse themselves with books, games or handicrafts except for a night out to a theater followed by a dinner at a Chinese restaurant. Almost all of the restaurants were Chinese and were famous for their massive teak furniture inlaid with mother-of-pearl and for leaded glass windows with figures of mandarins, peacocks, junks, etc. High teak partititons separated a large table and eight straight-back chairs into what was then called a cubicle. You specified a "cubicle" if you planned to seat a family or friends--a probable forerunner of the booth.

The modern laundry as we know it today was unknown. There was a Chinese laundry to every nine square blocks. You turned in your laundry and received what appeared to be red tissue paper with Chinese characters inscribed thereon. This was your receipt.

"Thoroughly Modern Millie," starring Julie Andrews, gives a most authentic recounting of the life of these times replete with Chinese villains.

Because the individual was less sophisticated and simple natured, he was more receptive and impressionable as a result. He was open-minded to thoroughly enjoy something funny or to enjoy being frightened. There are too many distractions and harassing factors today for any but a very exceptional person to give full attention or to concentrate on being open-minded.

I had a friend, director of the board of trade of a city in the English Midlands, whose aunt was so frightened after reading an episode of Dr. Fu Manchu that she would not go to bed.

Baltimore was a gas-lit city, and many of its streets were still cobbled at the time. The early dusk and dark nights of the Fall of the year were

very conducive to the enjoyment of Sax Rohmer's books of perilous adventure; for the reader enjoys being frightened when he realises he is in a safe environment. Although the streets of the 20's were dimly lit, street crime was rare as was personal attack. Also, much could be said about not having to be anxious about what was on television, of having to finish a snack to get back to it, no income taxes, no "hard sell" advertising, etc. There seemed to be plenty of time for everything since there was nothing to dissuade one from whatever his particular purpose chanced to be.

* * *

From John Robert Colombo, Toronto, Canada:

Enclosed is a quotation that is interesting. Maybe the Review could publish Fleming's reply.

> Pierre: "Why don't you want the Bond character to continue?
>
> Mrs. Fleming: It's emotion at the moment, naturally. I feel rather emotional about it. I'm sure it couldn't come off.
>
> Pierre: It's never come off in the past. Sherlock Holmes . . . Fu Manchu really couldn't have been continued.
>
> Mrs. Fleming: No, well John Pearson, who's writing Ian's life and had all the letters in his office, found a very funny letter from Ian to Mrs. Sax Rohmer who had written to Ian asking if he'd continue Dr. Fu Manchu. I have never seen this letter, but I understand that Ian wrote a very funny reply--saying that he did not think this could ever be done."

(From Pierre Berton's THE COOL CRAZY COMMITTED WORLD OF THE SIXTIES: TWENTY-ONE TELEVISION ENCOUNTERS, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1966. Also published in the U.S. by Doubleday as VOICES OF THE SIXTIES.)

* * *

From Raymond Funk, Jr., Libertyville, Illinois:

During the last week of June, I was in Kansas City to see the American Library Association convention and the Sherlock Holmes meeting held in

conjunction with it. Knowing previously that there was a Fu Manchu Restaurant I determined to go to it. On the night before I left I walked the mile it was from my motel. I arrived about nine o'clock. It has a rather drab front and upon entering I asked for the owner. I was directed to the owner's sister since the owner, another woman, was out that evening. She gave me a tour of the place. It is not large for a restaurant with connecting dining rooms. The kitchen was spacious and I got to chat with the cooks about Chinese food. The food, I can say with assurance, is rather good. I was told that the present owner had acquired the establishment only recently. They were deciding on photographs to have postcards made, maybe, and as yet didn't have bar cards to serve drinks. For this reason I couldn't get the contents of the Fu Manchu cocktail that is mentioned in the menu. I plan to write back and see if they did get any postcards and about the drink. I also found that no one knew exactly who or what Fu Manchu was. Since they were the new management, I spent a little time and outlined briefly about Fu Manchu. I did get two menus (even at this time I planned to send you one). Thanked them and left. It was as you see an interesting but not very informative trip.

* * *

From John Harwood, New Bedford, Massachusetts:

In PRESIDENT FU MANCHU one of the characters had an interesting hobby. He takes one of the United States stamps and by cutting out a portion of it makes up a likeness of Fu Manchu. According to the passage on page 238 of the hardcover book (Sundial Press or page 158 of the Pyramid paperback) Sax Rohmer gives this description of the stamp:

> "It was a three-cent Daniel Webster stamp, dated 1932, gummed upside down upon a piece of cardboard, then framed by the paper in which a pear-shaped opening had been cut. The effect when the frame was dropped over the stamp, was singular to a degree.
>
> It produced a hideous Chinese face!
>
> Yes, the fact was unmistakable: inverted and framed in this way, the Daniel Webster stamp

presented a caricature, but a recognizable caricature, of Dr. Fu Manchu!"

It may be interesting to see what the fans have to say about the stamp and the resemblance the inverted portion has to Fu Manchu. I don't have a copy of the stamp as I gave up stamp collecting years ago but some stamp-collecting Rohmer fans may be able to check on the subject and give us their views.

* * *

From Roy V. Hunt, Denver, Colorado:

I can remember the old Collier's Hour back in 1931 when I got to hear a few chapters of YU'AN HEE SEE LAUGHS. Excellent stuff. They explained his get-away in more detail than did the book. Rohmer, in the book, very deftly fades him out. I missed hearing a year before the serialization of DAUGHTER OF FU MANCHU. At that time the only radio we had was a crystal set, and they can be maddening when you try to tickle in a certain program. I was lucky to hear what I did of YU'AN on this thing.

Here is a tidbit from memory lane: In 1931 when they showed DAUGHTER OF THE DRAGON (DAUGHTER OF FU MANCHU), they showed in a preview on the screen the full picture of the jacket design--sans title--of THE RETURN OF FU MANCHU. In the rare omnibus volume, THE BOOK OF FU MANCHU, this jacket design was used.

Do you recall in the old magazines of the early 30's when they advertised the blue-binding McKinlay, Stone set? It was a set of 11, and the way they were pictured in the ad was not the way they actually looked. In fact, I wish there was a set that looked that good. Here is an item for some Rohmer historian to look into and find out how this came about.

* *

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